



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Subject: Managed Forest Law Certified Group

Dear MFL Landowner:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking recognition for land enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) under the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Group Forest Certification program. ATFS identifies well-managed forests that provide environmental, social and economic benefits. Independent auditors accredited by ATFS completed a field review of the MFL program in early March. They were impressed with the quality of forest management practiced by Wisconsin MFL landowners and found the MFL program to be in basic conformance with the ATFS standards. The auditors are recommending pending certification to be offered upon completion of a few administration procedures, including notice to you about the certification program.

As a landowner in the MFL program, your tax law entry will be included automatically as part of the MFL Certified Group. No additional action is needed from you. There are no membership costs to you and no additional requirements to follow beyond your existing MFL agreement. Participation in American Tree Farm certification is, however, entirely voluntary. If you prefer not to be a member of the MFL Certified Group, you can file a MFL Certified Group Departure Form. Departing from MFL Group Certification would not jeopardize your ability to keep your land under the MFL program.

ATFS certification is something you can be proud of and may become an important distinction for forest products that you harvest under your MFL forest stewardship plan. There is growing demand for certified timber from Wisconsin forest industries responding to changing global markets. State leaders want to keep responsible wood-using industries in Wisconsin, save jobs and protect landowners' ability to sell timber. For those and other reasons, the Department of Natural Resources took steps to secure ATFS certification for MFL tracts with 10 to 10,000 total acres and site-specific forest management plans.

What are benefits from membership in the MFL Certified Group? Among the highlights:

- The ability to sell timber in the certified marketplace. Many wood-using industries here and around the world are increasingly demanding certified wood as evidence to consumers that forested lands are being managed sustainably. Although only time will tell for certain, in the future, failure to have your woodland certified could make it harder to sell timber. It is also possible that mills might be willing to pay higher prices for certified wood.
- Potentially, a better logging job in your woodlands. Loggers who wish to take certified wood products to market are required to get additional training and implement harvests in a sustainable way. Less damage to remaining trees and roads and more attention to protecting clean water may result if loggers know that your forestland is monitored in a certified group.

- An opportunity to educate your neighbors and the public about the importance of well-managed private forests. The American Tree Farm System is a widely recognized symbol of good forestry. Your participation in the MFL Certified Group will strengthen the message that private lands play a critical role in protecting our environment and serving the needs of society. *With almost 30,000 potential members, the MFL Certified Group will be the largest, certified "family forest" initiative in the world.*

If you would like to learn more about the MFL Certified Group, see the spring edition of DNR's *Forest Tax Law & Stewardship Newsletter* (which you will be receiving soon if it has not already been delivered in your mail). The DNR Forestry Internet page at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/ also contains additional information about forest certification.

Again, your land will be included as part of the MFL Certified Group unless you depart (opt-out) from group certification. If you elect to depart from the group, we'd appreciate your response by May 1, although you can disassociate from certification at any time if you wish. **If you choose to remain in the MFL Certified Group – you need not reply!**

Third party forest certification is becoming a standard in the wood-using industry, and it is my hope that you will be a MFL Certified Group member. ATFS Group Certification for MFL is also an opportunity for you to take credit for applying sustainable practices that are ecologically responsible, socially beneficial, and economically valuable.

Sincerely,

Paul DeLong
Wisconsin Chief State Forester



Cc: DNR Service Foresters
Forestry Leadership Team
Bob Simpson

2004 -2008 AFF STANDARDS OF SUSTAINABILITY FOR FOREST CERTIFICATION OF PRIVATE LANDS

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) Standards of Sustainability apply to all private lands in the MFL Certified Group. Group Members need to manage their land in conformance with the AFF Standards, Core Performance Measures and Primary Indicators. Tree Farm accredited auditors will periodically return to Wisconsin to evaluate whether the MFL Group continues to measure up to the standards. A table listing comparable MFL regulations that reflect these AFF Standards is available on the DNR Internet.

Standard 1: Ensuring Sustainable Forests

The American Forest Foundation's (AFF) Standards of Sustainability promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry.

Performance Measure 1.1

Qualified forest owners must comply with AFF's Standards of Sustainability. American Tree Farm System (ATFS)'s volunteer network of accredited, qualified natural resource managers will conduct field verification of landowner conformance.

Indicators 1.1.1

An accredited Tree Farm Inspector must inspect qualified properties to assure conformance with AFF's standards of sustainability.

Indicator 1.1.2

Tree Farm inspectors will audit certified properties every five years. Properties that fail to meet AFF's standards and guidelines will be decertified. [Landowners may seek review of de-certification decisions through ATFS's formal dispute resolution process. Also, the MFL Certified Group Organization audit qualifies as the five-year reinspection.]

Standard 2: Compliance with Laws

Forest management complies with all relevant federal, state and local regulations and ordinances.

Performance Measure 2.1

Forest owners must comply with all relevant federal, state, county, and municipal laws and regulations.

Indicator 2.1.1*

Landowner affirms that he/she complies with all relevant laws and regulations, and that he/she will correct conditions that led to adverse regulatory actions, if any.

Indicator 2.1.2

Landowner obtains advice from forestry consultants, public agency natural resource managers, or contractors who are trained in, and familiar with, applicable laws, regulations and published Best Management Practices for forestry.

Standard 3: Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry

Forest owners demonstrate their commitment to sustainability by developing and implementing a long-term forest management plan.

Performance Measure 3.1

Forest owners must have a written forest management plan consistent with the scale of forestry operations of the property.

Indicator 3.1.1

Management plans include: title page; type of ownership (e.g., fee simple, limited partnership, etc.); owners goals appropriate to the management objectives; tract map noting stands and conditions, important features including special

sites, and management recommendations that address wood and fiber production, wildlife habitat, owner-designated fish, wildlife and plant species if desired, environmental quality, and, if present and desired by the landowner, recreational opportunities.

Indicator 3.1.2*

Management plan is active, adaptive, and embodies the owners' current objectives, remains appropriate for the land certified, and reflects the current state of knowledge about forestry and natural resource management.

Performance Measure 3.2

Forest owners assure management activities are conducted in accordance with the management plan.

Indicator 3.2.1

On-site visit, interviews, and records confirm management activities are being conducted in accordance with the plan.

Standard 4: Reforestation

Forest owners provide timely restocking of desirable species of trees, compatible with regional ecosystems on harvested areas and idle areas where tree-growing is the land use objective.

Performance Measure 4.1

Land must be reforested with natural seeding, sprouting, direct seeding, or reforestation with tree seedlings.

Indicator 4.1.1

Harvested forest land must achieve satisfactory stocking levels reflecting the forest owner's management objectives, within five years after harvest, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation, whichever is shorter.

Standard 5: Air, Water and Soil Protection

Forestry practices maintain or enhance the environment, including air, water, soil, and site quality.

Performance Measure 5.1

Forest owners must adhere to State Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) and comply with all relevant forest practices act(s) and ordinances.

Indicator 5.1.1*

Landowner affirms that he/she complies with all relevant laws and regulations, and that he/she will remedy or has remedied any conditions that led to adverse regulatory actions, if any.

Indicator 5.1.2

Landowner must minimize disturbances within riparian zones.

Indicator 5.1.3

On-site visit confirms that landowner is conducting management activities in accordance with BMPs and all relevant forest practices act[s] and ordinances.

Performance Measure 5.2

Application of forest chemicals must not exceed the levels necessary to achieve specific management objectives.

Indicator 5.2.1

Chemicals are applied only when necessary to meet specific management objectives.

Indicator 5.2.2

Management plans consider integrated pest management as a preferred means of controlling insect pests, pathogens, and vegetative competition.

Indicator 5.2.3

Chemicals are applied in accordance with EPA-approved labels and meet or exceed all human health and environmental safety requirements on the label, and in local, state, and federal law.

Performance Measure 5.3

Where prescribed fire is used, the forest owner must plan appropriately for its application.

Indicator 5.3.1

Landowner affirms that if and when prescribed fire is used, it is conducted in accordance with the owner's management plan and with state and local laws and regulations.

Indicator 5.3.2

On-site visit confirms prescribed fires, if used, were conducted in accordance with the management plan and applicable laws and regulations.

Standard 6: Fish, Wildlife and Biodiversity

Forest management activities contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and maintain or enhance habitat for native fish, wildlife, and plant species, with emphasis on natural plant and animal communities and rare plants and animals.

Performance Measure 6.1

Landowners are encouraged to confer with their local natural resource agencies, state natural resource heritage programs, or other knowledgeable sources about rare species or species of concern that occur on their property.

Indicator 6.1.1

Where practical, management plans consider and address opportunities to protect rare species and special habitat features.

Performance Measure 6.2

Forest management activities must maintain or enhance habitat for owner's designated fish, wildlife, and plant species as identified in the management plan

Indicator 6.2.1

Forest management activities must maintain or improve habitat for owner's target game and non-game fish and wildlife species.

Standard 7: Forest Aesthetics

Forest management practices minimize negative visual impacts of forest activities.

Performance Measure 7.1

Landowners must manage their forest with concern for visual impacts, in a manner consistent with size and scale of their forestry operations.

Indicator 7.1.1

On tracts of significant visual exposure, management plans and forest operations may include: roadside buffers, access entry "dog-legs," limited harvests in certain areas, and adaptation of other visual management techniques.

Standard 8: Protect Special Sites

Special sites are managed in a way that recognizes their unique characteristics.

Performance Measure 8.1

Forest management practices must recognize historical, biological, archaeological, cultural, and geological sites of special interest.

Indicator 8.1.1

Management plan and forest operations identify and manage for special sites in a manner consistent with forest owner's objectives, the unique features of the site, and the size and scale of the property.

Standard 9: Wood Fiber Harvest and Other Operations

Wood fiber harvests and other forest operations are conducted in accordance with the management plan and with sensitivity to other forest values (e.g., water quality, regeneration, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, special sites, etc.).

Performance Measure 9.1

Landowners must comply with the management plan described in Standard Three (3).

Performance Measure 9.2

Landowners must adhere to all national, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to forest management when conducting forest operations.

Indicator 9.2.1*

In selecting contractors, landowners seek loggers, foresters, and other forest management contractors who have completed recommended training and education programs offered in their respective states.

Indicator 9.2.2*

Loggers and contractors conducting wood fiber harvests and other forest management operations carry required Workers Compensation and general liability insurance.

Other Indicator

Group Members file MFL Cutting Notices and Reports and, where required by the County, other appropriate cutting notices.

***Optional indicator not included in the MFL Certified Group Audit Plan**